

**ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING
QUARTERLY MEETING**

December 4, 2020

Virtual -ZOOM

MEMBERS PRESENT: Michelle Paonessa, Chair, Russ Goddard, Vice-Chair, Lori Leiman, Karen Leslie Henry, Alexander Van Hook, Rebecca Lorah, Trish Mader, Amy Letteri, Stacey Gustin, Jeanette Fulton.

ODHH STAFF: Melissa Hawkins, Director, DeeDee Keiser, Ben Moonan, Denise Brown

INTERPRETERS: Cindi Brown, Jessica Bentley - Sassamon

CART: Debbie Cunningham

ZOOM Moderator: Nichole Wade

Review and Approval of September 25, 2020 Minutes

Russ made a motion to approve the minutes with Karen seconding the motion. Motion passed and minutes were approved.

Guest speakers were Representative Sarah Innamorato and Thomas Woods. Sarah is a representative in 21st District which covers Alleghany County. Both Sarah and Tommy spoke about clear masks and the importance of wearing them. They are advocating for speakers during press events to wear them, first responders and medical staff.

Amy followed up with importance of advocacy for clear masks at county level as well.

Department reports:

Education: Jeanette spoke about requirements of forms being submitted to make sure that school communities are implementing the mandated health and safety mitigation strategies when offering in-person instruction.

Health: Stacey's first update was that Mark Bell returned to the program. He was our early detection and early intervention administrator. DOH received additional funds, federal funds, to do things COVID related and related to telehealth. They were holding round table discussions done virtually with the different stakeholder's enrollment into EI to come and talk about how to do this and what the barriers and challenges are and to see if they can overcome any of those together.

Aging: Rebecca updated the council on continued efforts to update our PACE CARE website for the PACE program. Also being updated is the price finder website. The department is considering all accessibility needs with both websites.

Human Services: Nothing to Report

Labor and Industry: Shannon Austin spoke releasing about a little over 3500 cases from our waiting list. The number of deaf and hearing or just deaf or Deaf-Blind that equates to about 374. Since October 1 of this year OVR has placed about 1,633 individuals into employment. Russ mentioned the deaf and hard of hearing summer academy program. Will be virtual in 2021 via zoom. It will be 2 weeks in length and the dates were still being determined.

Public Comment:

Nancy Kingsley, State Director for HLAA – May 2021 Lunch and Learn was cancelled due to Covid. Will be rescheduled to April or May of 2022. Also, Nancy asked ODHH Director, Melissa Hawkins to mention to DOH Secretary to possibly wear a clear mask during briefings.

Jeff Iseman, PA SILC – Inquired about distribution of PPE which could include clear masks. Jeff mentioned that PPE is available to some degree across long-term care facilities, home, and community-based service providers. Silc doesn't hear anything about a clear mask, but that doesn't meet its not available.

Sharon Behun – Sharon mentioned that the changing of Secretary of Labor was not mentioned in any report and should be acknowledged. Sharon also mentioned that SSP services at CILCP were ending on December 31, 2020. She asked why there was no update from OVR or other agencies on funding sources. There is a fee code according to Sharon.

Jess Adams – COO of Deaf Stone Services, Deafstone will start SSP Services on January 1st. Serving Pittsburgh area for now. It will be a diagram fee for services, but they are currently raising funds and working on grants to provide free services.

Subcommittee Update:

Distance Learning- This group decided to focus on virtual learning platforms. And to identify the different platforms and to research the accessibility features of the platforms. Identified, were Zoom, Google Meets, web ex and Microsoft Teams. So, members of the committee did their research. The next step is to meet to formalize the information we have no one document and we would like to have an ASL video describing the document produced with the ultimate goal being to have the information and the resource link on the ODHH website.

Early Intervention - in an information gathering stage right now about barriers and access issues presented in the early intervention system. They have identified a anybody of barriers on the back end including difficulties with continuity of care between audiologist, early intervention, and the newborn hearing screening groups. And they are working with our intervention team to can be excuse me the newborn hearing screening team which has recently put out a survey of audiologists to understand some of the barriers in that respect.

They are also working to get some more information about how high risk families or families that

decline services are followed up with and make sure that we have information to ensure the accessibility and appropriateness of services for all deaf families who have chosen an oral route or ASL, from families that are experienced with hearing loss or families who have children who are deaf without any experience with hearing loss. brainstorming ways to put together a volunteer organization made up of stakeholders with various perspectives on deafness and deaf communication to reach out to newly diagnosed families.

Selection of Dates for 2021 meetings:

March 19

June 18

September 24

December 3

Motion was made by Amy to draft a letter to DOH on clear masks. Karen second the motion. Motion passed.

Karen made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Russ second. Meeting adjourned.